Camelia GRADINARU
"Al. I. Cuza" University of Iaşi (Romania)

# Our Everyday Frailty: Selfhood, Contingency and Online Belief Networks

**Abstract:** Richard Rorty's *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* has been one of the most influential books in the last two decades. The concepts and the philosophical problems developed in it created a fruitful intellectual agenda for scholars active in many fields of social sciences. The advent of digital culture, on the other hand, spurred interest in the re-interpretation of the latter within the frame of online communication. In my paper, I focus on the traits of contingency and selfhood – seen against the background of cyberspace – and on their effects on our beliefs. An analysis of people's online behaviours shows that the multitude of possibilities available is counterbalanced by the epistemic risks. Understanding this tension helps us keep a useful online conversation going and recalibrate our hopes for an effective electronic future.

**Keywords:** Richard Rorty, contingency, selfhood, cyberspace, online belief networks.